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FATHER JAS. C. BEISSEL ON THE INQUISITION

Continuance of Articles on History of the Dealings of Church and State With Heretics
---Mr. Dove Comments.

(Continued.)
VII. REMARK.

It is right to judge a tree by its fruits, and side by side with the odium cast upon the Inquisition, to learn the happy results which it produced. Now it can not be denied that, to a great extent at least, it is due to the Inquisition that several countries of Europe have preserved the faith untainted for centuries, and in particular, that they have been saved from the pernicious invasion of intolerant and sanguinary Protestantism. Voltaire, that bitter enemy of the Inquisition and of the Catholic Church, was candid enough to write: "During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, at the time of the Inquisition, the nation of SPAIN DID NOT WITNESS IN HER MIDST THE BLOODY REVOLUTIONS, THE CONSPIRACIES AGAINST THE THRONE, AND THE TERRIBLE DISASTERS THAT DESOLATED THE OTHER ROYAL HOUSES OF EUROPE. No King was assassinated as in France, no royal head was felled by the hand of the executioner as in England." The Spanish Inquisition, notwithstanding all its rigors and excesses, which we freely admit, and the cause of which we have already adduced, can say this much in its defense. The Spanish government saw that all Europe was in flames and all hands reeking with blood, wherever heresy and schism arose and the unity of faith had been lost. The Peasants' war, the Thirty Years' war, the excesses of the Anabaptists' seditions in France; the cruelties that desolated the Netherlands; the wholesale butcheries in England, particularly under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth; the high-handed measures, exiles, confiscations and murders with which the Catholic faith was exterminated, root and branch, from the people of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, taught the other European Catholic nations lessons not to be easily forgotten. The Spanish rulers, seeing this determined to spare Spain these and similar terrors, by preserving, at all cost, the unity of the faith among that intensely Catholic people, and by stamping out and excluding from the realm even the first germ of Protestant rebellion, which proselytizing zealots were trying to disseminate in the Spanish Peninsula. The Inquisition was the means devised for the purpose. Spain therefore owes to the Inquisition, notwithstanding its abuses, the preservation of the Catholic faith, the preservation of national and religious unity, and an unbroken internal peace at a time when, in consequence of Protestant rebellion against the authority of Rome other parts of Europe were bleeding under the curse of civil and religious wars. How can we blame that tribunal for the death and tortures of a few obstinate heretics, when we see that thereby the whole of Spain was saved from interminable civil wars, and all the horrors that characterized the religious fanaticism of the sectarians of northern Europe?

A brief reference to another kind of Inquisition will not be here out of place. The penal laws against Catholics passed in England and her colonies, in Scotland, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Germany, have never been collected yet; but such as have been brought together at times present a revolting picture, THE STUDY OF WHICH WOULD MAKE CERTAIN PEOPLE BLUSH AND CHANGE SOME POPULAR IDEAS. And, please notice well, in these States the CATHOLIC RELIGION WAS AT HOME, was in possession for many hundreds of years. Catholics, therefore, were not introducing new religious creeds, assailing existing institutions, or disturbing the public peace. THEY WERE INOFFENSIVE LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS, WHO SIMPLY ASKED TO BE ALLOWED TO RETAIN THE FAITH AND PRACTICES HANDLED DOWN TO THEM BY THEIR FOREFATHERS, EVEN FROM THE VERY INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO THEIR LAND.

"Consider," writes Joseph de Maistre, "the Thirty Years' war, lit up by the inflammatory harangues of Luther; the unheard of atrocities of the Anabaptists and the Peasants, the civil wars of France, England, Flanders, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the massacre of Merindol and the Cevennes; the murder of Mary Stuart, Henry III, Henry IV., Charles I., of the Prince of Orange. A ship could float in the blood which the Reformers caused to be shed. Do not tell us that the Inquisition produced this or that abuse; for this is not the question. In pronouncing sentence over the Spanish Inquisition, the important thing to know is, whether, during the three last centuries, there has been, because of the Inquisition, more peace and happiness in Spain than in other countries of Europe."

"The Inquisition," as Father Christie wisely remarks, "was the corrective to what we should call lynch law. Reflect for a moment what might have resulted from the uncontrollable indignation of the people, Catholic to the

backbone, if men were found to blurt out blasphemies against all that such a people held to be holy, and to spread doctrines which would seduce their children, the rising generation, from all that they deemed precious in this life and the next. What could we expect but tumultuary risings; terrible effects of violence and massacres—lynch law with all its horrors? The Tribunal of Faith prevented such consequences. At the outset of the sixteenth century the Spaniards saw, as it were, the rising smoke, premonitory of a conflagration in Europe. They adopted the Inquisition as a means for preserving religious unity and preventing religious wars. Hence, during the three centuries after the reorganization of the Inquisition, Spain enjoyed more peace and prosperity than any other country in Europe. We have read with horror of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's. What was this massacre? The most satisfactory account would seem to be that without lawful process, under the impulse of popular indignation, lynch law was executed on the assailants of the faith of Frenchmen. The proceeding was unjustifiable, but it took place because France had no Tribunal of Faith. Spain itself, before the Tribunal of Faith was set on its efficient footing by Sixtus IV., had its St. Bartholomew in the massacre of the Jews in 1391, in which 5000 Jews perished. If then the very zeal of a people for that which counts more precious than life itself, is liable to carry the multitude into excesses greatly to be deplored, it is evidently most desirable that a tribunal should exist which should judge cases without prejudice, which should protect the innocent, carry conviction to the mistaken, and punish those only who really deserved punishment."

"A reproach has been made against the Inquisition," says Joseph de Maistre, "that it exercised a blighting influence upon the human mind. Now, the brilliant century of Spanish literature was that of Philip II. As history testifies, the golden age of Spain had reached its highest pinnacle of glory at the very epoch of the Inquisition from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. Llorente in the second volume of his work, tells us that no less than 118 learned men were cited before the Inquisition; but he takes good care NOT TO INFORM THE READER that none of them lost even a hair of his head. It is in vain that men will keep repeating that it is putting fetters on genius to forbid it from attacking dogmas, held by the whole nation; error can never be justified simply because of its repetition." (Letter to a gentleman on the Spanish Inquisition.)

VIII. REMARK.

Let us make a last remark that will allay the ridiculous terror, which certain men are pleased to excite. If, as we have seen, the Church has an undeniable right to punish heretics; if she did make use of this right when it was proper to do so, she is in no wise obliged to use it always; she must even discontinue to use it, when its exercise would become impossible or hurtful. One thing is THE RIGHT, and quite another thing ITS EXERCISE. The former rests on justice; the latter depends on prudence, and may vary according to circumstances. And as a matter of fact, the Church has renounced the exercise of this right long ago, so that the Inquisition is now nothing more than an historical remembrance and a bugbear in the service of ignorance, bigotry and impiety. They who pretend to tremble at the recollection of this dread tribunal can now sleep in peace. The Catholic sword is no longer suspended over their heads. Would to heaven that in all countries Catholics were equally secure against the attacks of the secular power usually little given to tolerance. What is then the sum and substance of this discussion of the Inquisition? Father Sasia says it is briefly this: "THAT AS ESTABLISHED OR RECOGNIZED BY THE CHURCH, AND IN AS FAR AS IT HAS BEEN USED, STRICT OBEYANCE TO HER LAWS AND DIRECTIONS, IT WAS AN INSTITUTION HOLY IN ITS OBJECT, JUST IN ITS MEASURES, AND BENEFICIAL IN ITS RESULTS. That the popular notions, which prevail about it among Protestant people in general, ARE BASED UPON FALSEHOOD, NURTURED BY PREJUDICE, FOSTERED BY CREDULITY AND PERPETUATED BY THE INSTRUMENT OF A HOSTILE PRESS. Well-poisoning has been committed by historians such as Llorente and others who wrote 'history' with an end in view. They shaped things to meet their end. Millions of people have been misled. We mentioned the Encyclopedia Britannica. The editors of the Appleton Encyclopedia, when finding out three

years ago that they had copied the common Protestant falsehoods about Catholic matters, have recently SUPPRESSED ONE WHOLE EDITION OF THEIR BOOKS in order to correct these errors. Modern historical research brings to light the true facts. Catholics do not expect any defense of their position from the pages of secular journals, magazines, reviews or other publications, whose editors and writers, ostensibly at least, have not pledged themselves to the advocacy of any particular creed; but we have a right to see that our Church and her institutions are neither maligned nor misrepresented, for we hold our faith dearer than our lives and we shall not allow it to be attacked with impunity. The Church is our Mother, and nothing to us is more luminous than the fact of her heavenly origin and divine institution. And as she is to us a Mother, to her we are sons. Her honor is ours; her dishonor is our dishonor. He who ventures to strike at her good name raises up an army against himself. Smite, wound, slander, calumniate, hold us up to ridicule personally, and we can bear it. But touch her not; thrill us not through by casting a scornful eye on her; the arrow is in the string, and the bow is bent, and ten thousand mighty ones are at her side ready to defend her with voice and pen and even, if need be, with the sacrifice of their lives. Catholics are justly sensitive to many things regarding their belief; but there is one thing which they feel more acutely than all the indignities and calumnies heaped upon their Church, to whom they owe, under God, their spiritual life and their happiness, both here and hereafter."

In concluding presently this discussion on the Inquisition, I have only one more word to add. It is my deep felt thanks to the gentlemen of the Honolulu press, who by their kindness have enabled me to put before the public the facts of this interesting question in the sunlight of Catholic truth. May it help to uproot prejudice and strengthen among all the Christian denominations the bonds of mutual charity.

JAMES C. BEISSEL.

P.S.—The number of years the Spanish Inquisition lasted is 331, not 33 as was misprinted yesterday. B.

SIDE LIGHTS ON THE PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

Honolulu, H. T., January 26th, 1907.

Editor Advertiser: Our esteemed controversialist, Father James, has laid such stress on the likeness of the guiding of papal infallibility to the magnetic needle of a vessel which alone enables the voyager to reach his home port safely, that surely a short glance at the historical record to show how frequently this compass has got mixed among its own points and thus led the trusting mariner on to the rocks and shoals will not be out of place.

If only one of the cases cited is historically true would it not be better to compare the papal direction to the astatic needle (used in electrical testing apparatus) which has such feeble directive tendency that it is subject to any external influence and neither distinguishes north from south or east from west.

WITCHCRAFT.

In the tenth century, Gerbert, afterwards known as Pope Sylvester II, was suspected of sorcery when he showed a disposition to adopt scientific methods in dealing with the practice of medicine.

In 1317 Pope John XXII issued his bull SPONDENT PARTER, levelled at the alchemists but really dealing a terrible blow at the beginnings of chemical science. That many alchemists were knavish is no doubt true, but no infallibility in separating the evil from the good was shown by the papacy in this matter. In this and in sundry other bulls and briefs we find Pope John, by virtue of his infallibility as the world's instructor in all that pertains to faith and morals condemning real science and pseudo-science alike. In two of these documents, supposed to be inspired by wisdom from on high, he complains that both he and his flock were in danger of their lives by the arts of sorcerers; he declares that such sorcerers can send devils into mirrors and finger rings, and kill men and women by a magic word; that they had tried to kill him by piercing a waxen image of him with needles in the name of the devil. He therefore called on all rulers, secular and ecclesiastical, to hunt down the miscreants who thus afflicted the faithful, and he especially increased the powers of inquisitors in various parts of Europe for this purpose.

The impulse thus given to childish fear and hatred against the investigation of nature was felt for centuries; more and more chemistry came to be known as one of the "seven devilish arts."

In 1437, Pope Eugene IV., by virtue

of the teaching power conferred on him by the Almighty, and under the divine guarantee against any possible error in the exercise of it, issued a bull exhorting the inquisitors of heresy and witchcraft to use greater diligence against the human agents of the Prince of Darkness and especially against those who have the power to produce bad weather, the result being that persecution received a fearful impulse.

In 1445, Pope Eugene returned again to the charge and again issued instructions and commands infallibly committing the Church to the doctrine. But the worst came forty years later, when, in 1484, there came the yet more terrible bull of Pope Innocent VIII, known as SUMMUS DESIDERANTES, which let inquisitors loose upon Germany with Spranger at their head, armed with the WITCH HAMMER, the fearful manual MALLEUS MALEFICARUM, to torture and destroy men, women and children by tens of thousands for sorcery and magic. Similar bulls were issued in 1504 by Julius II. and in 1523 by Adrian VI.

MEDICINE.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Lateran Council forbade physicians, under pain of exclusion from the church, to undertake medical treatment without calling in ecclesiastical advice. This view was long cherished in the church, and nearly two hundred and fifty years later Pope Pius revived it by renewing the command of Pope Innocent and enforcing it with penalties. Not only did Pope Pius order that all physicians before administering treatment should call in "a physician of the soul," on the ground, as he declares, that "bodily infirmity frequently arises from sin," but he ordered that, if at the end of three days the patient had not made confession to a priest, he medical man should cease his treatment, under pain of being deprived of his right to practice, and of expulsion from the faculty if he were a professor, and that every physician and professor of medicine should make oath that he was strictly fulfilling these conditions.

Out of this feeling had grown up another practice, which made the development of medicine still more difficult—the classing of scientific men generally with sorcerers and magic mongers; from this largely rose the charge of atheism against physicians which ripened into a proverb "UBI SUNT TRES MEDICI IBI SUNT DUO ATHEI."

NATURAL SCIENCE.

In 1163, Pope Alexander III, in connection with the Council of Tours, forbade the study of physics to all ecclesiastics, which, of course, in that age meant prohibition of all such scientific studies to the only persons likely to make them. What the Pope then expressly forbade was, in the words of the papal bull, "the study of physics or the laws of the world," and it was added that any person violating this rule "shall be avoided by all and excommunicated."

The list of great men in these centuries charged with magic, as given by Naude is astounding; it includes every man of real mark and in the midst of them Sylvester II, and the foremost of medieval thinkers on natural science, Albert the Great.

It came to be the accepted idea, that as soon as a man conceived a wish to study the works of God, his first step must be a league with the devil.

USURY.

In the thirteenth century Pope Gregory IX, dealt an especially severe blow at commerce by his declaration that even to advance on interest the money necessary in maritime trade was damnable usury; this was fully followed by Gregory X, who forbade Christian burial to those guilty of this practice; the Council of Lyons meted out the same penalty. In the 14th century the Council of Vienne, presided over by Pope Clement V., declared that if any one "shall pertinaciously presume that the taking of interest for money is not a sin, we decree him to be a heretic fit for punishment," this infallible utterance bound the dogma with additional force on the conscience of the Universal Church. By the middle of the 8th century, however, the Church authorities at Rome clearly saw the necessity of concession; the world would endure theological restriction no longer; a way of escape must be found. Fortunately for the world, the seat of St. Peter was then occupied by Benedict XIV., certainly one of the most gifted morally and intellectually of Roman pontiffs. Tolerant and sympathetic for the oppressed, he saw the necessity of taking up the question, and he grappled with it effectually; he rendered to Catholicism a service like that which Calvin had rendered to Protestantism, by shrewdly cutting away through the theological barrier. In 1745 he issued his encyclical VIX PERVENIT, which declared that the doctrine of the Church remained consistent of itself; that usury is indeed a sin, and that it consists in DEMANDING ANY AMOUNT BEYOND THE EXACT AMOUNT LENT, but that there are occasions when on special grounds the lender may obtain such additional sum. What these occasions and special grounds might be, was left very vague; but this action was sufficient. At the same time no restrictions upon books advocating the taking of interest for money were imposed, and, in the year following his encyclical, Benedict

(Continued on Page Three.)

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